



May 17, 2010

USAID Launches Food, Agribusiness, and Rural Markets (FARM) Program in Southern Sudan

Juba, Central Equatoria – The U.S. Government, acting through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), today launched a new agricultural program in partnership with the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS). The launch ceremony was led by the Minister of Regional Cooperation, General Oyai Deng Ajak; the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF), Dr. Samson L. Kwaje; USAID Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah; U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Robert E. Whitehead; and USAID/Sudan Mission Director William Hammink.

The Food, Agribusiness, and Rural Markets (FARM) program is an agricultural initiative that will be implemented over five years in partnership between MAF and USAID, with a total budget of \$55 million. The program will initially focus on select counties in southern Sudan’s ‘green belt zone,’ which spans Western, Central, and Eastern Equatoria states, and where conflict destroyed much of the local capacity for agricultural production during Sudan’s civil war. This area has high agricultural potential and will soon be connected through new road construction to fast-growing markets for farm goods. The FARM program will provide technical assistance and related support to the GOSS Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, as well as state ministries of agriculture.

"USAID is proud to work with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry on this innovative and promising project," said USAID Administrator Shah. "The FARM program marshals a variety of resources in a re-emerging agricultural area and will inspire others to join as partners in reducing hunger in southern Sudan. This is a solid, high-impact use of U.S. support that will save lives and develop livelihoods."

The program will focus on smallholder producers to rapidly increase their production of selected staple crops, such as maize and sorghum. The program seeks to increase farm productivity, trade, and the capacity of people engaged in the agricultural sector in southern Sudan, including producers and those in the private and public sectors.

Agriculture is the backbone of economic development in southern Sudan, employing the majority of the population of more than 8 million, 80 percent of whom live in rural areas. More than 90 percent of southern Sudanese live on less than \$1 per day and according to the World Food Program, more than 52 percent of the people face food insecurity. Southern Sudan is highly dependent on expensive food imports from neighboring Uganda and Kenya.

By fostering inclusive economic growth, the FARM program will help reduce poverty and food insecurity in southern Sudan.

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